

Message Text

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PAGE 01 YAOUND 01851 110719Z

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FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3448

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL DOUALA

C O N F I D E N T I A L YAOUNDE 1851

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, CM

SUBJECT: MINOR CABINET CHANGES

1. IN A MINOR CABINET RESHUFFLE DECREED BY PRESIDENT AHIDJO
ON JUNE 7:

(A) VROUMSIA TCHINAYE (HITHERTO MINISTER OF INFORMATION
AND CULTURE) NAMED MINISTER OF CIVIL SERVICE;

(B) JOSEPH CHARLES DOUMBA (SECRETARY GENERAL OF NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY) NAMED MIN INFO AND CULTURE;

(C) FELIX SABAL-LECCO (MIN CIVIL SERVICE) LEAVES CABINET FOR
POST OF PRESIDENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL.

2. SABAL-LECCO'S APPOINTMENT, EXPECTED TO BE FOLLOWED SOON BY
NAMING OF OTHER MEMBERS TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL, WILL THUS
BRING INTO BEING FOR THE FIRST TIME THE LAST OF THE MAJOR
INSTITUTIONS CALLED FOR BY THE MAY 1972 CONSTITUTION WHICH
TRANSFORMED CAMEROON INTO A UNITARY REPUBLIC. ALTHOUGH
THIS COUNCIL IS A PURELY CONSULTATIVE BODY AND ONLY TIME
WILL TELL WHETHER IT IS TO PLAY ANY MEANINGFUL OR EVEN
USEFUL ROLE, APPOINTMENT AS ITS PRESIDENT IS HONORIFIC
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PAGE 02 YAOUND 01851 110719Z

STEP UPWARD FOR SABAL-LECCO WHO LEAVES AN ESSENTIALLY UN-

GLAMOROUS MINISTRY. HE IS REPORTEDLY AN EXCELLENT ADMINISTRATOR.

3. VROUMSIA TCHINAYE SEEMS TO HAVE TAKEN A SIGNIFICANT STEP DOWNWARD FROM THE LARGE AND SENSITIVE INFO AND CULTURE MINISTRY. HOLDS DOCTORATE FROM FRENCH UNIVERSITY AND IS GENERALLY CONSIDERED TO HAVE BEEN ORIGINALLY APPOINTED TO CABINET POSITION BECAUSE HE IS ONE OF VERY FEW EDUCATED KIRDI--THE BACKWARD NON-MUSLIM ORIGINAL INHABITANTS OF NORTH CAMEROON WHO ARE STILL REGARDED SCORNFULLY AS DREGS OF CAMEROON SOCIETY. A SOMETIMES GENIAL BUT MORE OFTEN TOUGH AND BRUTAL CHARACTER, AND HEAVY DRINKER, TCHINAYE'S ASSIGNMENT TO INFO AND CULTURE PORTFOLIO HAD SEEMED ESPECIALLY INCONGRUOUS. WE HAVE HEARD MIXED REPORTS ON HIS ABILITIES AS AN ADMINISTRATOR. HAVE ALSO HEARD FROM SOURCE WITHIN MINISTRY THAT TCHINAYE FELT OVERBURDENED AND HAD REQUESTED RELIEF FROM INFO AND CULTURE.

4. DOUMBA WAS LONG-TIME SEC GEN AT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. ALSO ENTRUSTED MORE RECENTLY WITH ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITY AS DIRECTOR OF STUDIES AT CAMEROON NATIONAL UNION (UNC) HIGH-LEVEL TRAINING SCHOOL FOR PARTY MILITANTS INAUGURATED IN FEBRUARY. HIS PERFORMANCE THERE MAY HAVE HELPED EARN THIS PROMOTION TO IMPORTANT CABINET POST. A LAWYER AND EXPERT IN CONSTITUTIONAL LAW, HE IS ABLE, DYNAMIC, AND AGREEABLE.
MOORE

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